

THE VERB

General information about verbs and tenses

☉ Definition

A verb is a word (*run*) or a phrase (*run out*) which expresses the existence of a state (*hate, smell*) or the doing of an action (*swim, write*). There are two important facts:

- 1) Verbs are used to express distinctions in time (past, present, future) through tense.

*We **saw** them at the concert yesterday.* (Past)

*They **are doing** their homework at the moment.* (Present)

*Tom **will be** grateful to his parents all his life.* (Future)

- 2) Auxiliary verbs are used with full verbs to give other information about actions and states. For example, *be* is used with the present participle of a full verb to say that an action is going on or in progress, at a particular time or with the past participle to form the passive voice.

*He **was reading** a novel when I came in.* (progressive aspect)

*He **was sent** the confirmation by post.* (passive voice)

Have is used with the past participle of a full verb to form perfect tenses and means the completion of an action.

*You'll watch TV after you **have finished** doing your homework.*

☉ Verb tenses

The only two cases where the form of the basic verb varies are present and past: *hate (hates), write (writes)* - present ; *hated, wrote* - past. For the other tenses all combinations of *be* + present participle and *have* + past participle as tenses are used. The same is true for *will* + bare infinitive to refer to the future. We must remember that tense in English is often not entirely related to time.

***Could** you lend me your eraser for a moment?* (Present not past)

*I **will come** on time, don't worry* (more of a promise than a future action).

Tenses have two forms, simple and progressive (or continuous). The formula for the progressive aspect is S + Be + V-*ing* (or present participle):

	<u>simple</u>	<u>progressive</u>
present:	I walk	I <i>am</i> walking
past:	I walked	I <i>was</i> walking
present perfect:	I have walked	I <i>have been</i> walking
past perfect:	I had walked	I <i>had been</i> walking
future in		

the past: I would walk I *would be* walking
future: I will walk I will be walking
future perfect: I will have walked I *will have been* walking.

Simple forms and progressive combinations can also occur with conditionals and modals:

present conditional: I would walk I *would be*
 walking
past conditional: I would have walked I *would have*
 been walking
modal: I may walk I *may be*
 walking.

☉ State and dynamic verbs

Some verbs are not generally used in progressive forms. They are called *state verbs* because they refer to states (e.g., experiences, conditions etc.) rather than to actions. In a sentence like, *He loves/loved tennis more than any other game*, 'loves/loved' describe a state over which he has no control: it is an involuntary feeling.

Dynamic verbs usually refer to actions which are deliberate or voluntary, *He's building a hen house*, or they refer to changing situations, *She's becoming prettier and prettier*, that is to activities which have a beginning or an end. We have three situations:

- 1) Dynamic verbs with progressive and simple forms;

I'm cleaning up my room.

I always clean my room at the weekend.

- 2) Verbs which are nearly always state verbs (simple forms only):

*I **hear** every noise from my neighbours through this thin wall.*

- 3) Verbs that have dynamic or state uses:

a) deliberate actions: *I'm **weighing** this sack of potatoes.*

b) states: *He **weighs** 180 pounds.*

According to L. G. Alexander, *state* verbs usually occur in the simple form in all tenses, meaning that they do not have progressive aspect. *States* can be categorised like this:

1. Feelings, emotions: **admire¹, adore, *appreciate, *attract, believe in, care about, *dare, dislike, doubt, fear, *hate, *hope, *interest, *like, *love, *mean, *regret, (can't) stand, trust.*
2. Thinking, believing: *agree, believe, (can't) comprehend, *consider, *expect, *feel, *find, get it, *guess (AmE²), *hear (be told), hear about (get to know), hear of (know*

¹ * = these verbs have also dynamic meanings/uses

² AmE = American English

about), *imagine (think), know, (suppose), *recognise, *see (understand), *(can't) tell, *think (believe), understand.

3. Wants and preferences: desire, fancy, need, prefer, want, wish.

4. Perception and the senses: *catch (understand), (can) *distinguish, (can) *hear, notice, (can) *see, (can) *smell, *taste.

5. Being, seeming, having, owning: afford, *appear (seem), belong (to), come from (your place of origin), concern, consist of, contain, *cost, *count, *depend, differ from, *feel, *fit, happen to, have/have got, *include, *involve, know by, *look (appear), matter, mean, merit, own, possess, *prove, *read, *represent, seem, *sound (seem), *stand for, suit (be { suitable), *tend, *weigh. (Alexander 1994: 341)

☉ Time reference with adverbs

Som e adverbs like *yesterday* and *tomorrow* refer to past or future,

*I skated three hours **yesterday**.*

*Mother will tell you a few things **tomorrow**.*

Other adverbs such as *already, always, ever, often, never, now, still* can be used with a variety of tenses, though they may often be associated with particular ones. For example, *always* is often associated with the simple present or past for habitual actions:

*She **always** took an umbrella when she went shopping.*

But it can be used with other tenses as well:

*He will **always** love his wife.*

*Father has **always** bought us useful things.*

*Peter used to tell us that he had **always** admired Mary.*

☉ Sequence of tenses

A complex sentence has more predicates whose tenses are influenced by one another. We usually have a major tense that can be influenced by:

1) *Stability in the use of tenses*: If we start a narrative or description from the present (*now*), we usually see the other tenses from a present perspective. We can have the following combinations:

present

present + present perfect

future

*He **is sitting** in the garden while she **is washing up**.*

*You **haven't finished** your homework although it **is** almost night.*

*Helen **boasts** that she **will earn** a lot of money at her new job.*

If we start a narrative or description with a past action (*then*) we usually maintain a *past perspective*.

past

past + past perfect

future in the past

*The moment he **got** into the house he **noticed** something was missing.*

*They **found out** that their friends **had** already **gone** home.*

*Susan **hoped** that her little boy **would** soon **be cured**.*

2) *The vicinity rule*: A *present tense* in the main clause (e.g., a reporting verb in the passive voice) is usually followed by a *present tense* in the subordinate clause.

*He **tells** me his father **is** a famous scientist.*

A *past tense* normally attracts another *past*.

*She **told** me she **was looking forward to** her summer holiday.*

A speaker or writer can ignore the vicinity rule and use a present tense after a past or a past after a present in order to be more precise:

*He **told** me his father **is** a famous scientist. (i.e., he still is)*

3) *Special tense sequences*: These special sequences of tenses are met in reported speech, in conditional sentences, time clauses, after verbs and phrases like *wish, I'd rather*, in clauses of purpose.³

*He **complained** he **hadn't been promoted** for a long time.*

*I **would have come** over if they **had invited** me.*

*He **will let** you know as soon as he **has** some news.*

*I **wish** I **had** a new car.*

☺ Types of verbs

We can classify verbs in different ways. One classification relates to the function of items in the verb phrase. This distinguishes lexical verbs (*read, look, go* etc.), and verbs from the closed system of auxiliaries which are subdivided into:

a) primary auxiliaries (*do, have, be*);

b) modal auxiliaries (according to L. G. Alexander: *can-could, may-might, shall-should, will-would, must, ought to, need, dare*. Quirk includes *used to* here);

c) semi-auxiliaries (subclass I: *be to, be bound to, be apt to, be going to, be liable to, be sure to, had/'d better/best, have to, have got to, come to = happen to, fail to, get to, tend to, etc.*; subclass II: *be certain to, be (un)likely to, appear to, happen to, seem to, turn out to*). (Quirk et al. 1972: 72)

³ They will be closely studied in Syntax.

☺ Verbal forms and the verbal phrase

Many English verbs have five forms: the base, V, (*play, ring*), the *-s* form (*plays, rings*), the past (*played, rang*), the present participle or the *-ing* form (*playing, ringing*) and the past participle or the *-ed* participle (*played, rung*). The regular lexical verbs have the same *-ed* inflection for both the past tense (V-ed1) and the *-ed* participle (V-ed2). The irregular lexical verb forms vary from three (*hurt, hurts, hurting*) to eight (*be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been*). The modal auxiliaries are defective: they do not have infinitive, *-ing* participle, *-ed* participle and imperative.

1) The base of the verb (*eat*) is used for:

a) all the present tenses except the third person singular:

I/you/we/they eat everyday.

b) the imperative: **Eat at once!**

c) the subjunctive: *She insisted that her daughter eat at once.*

d) the bare (short) infinitive: *He may eat.*

the *to* -infinitive: *He wants to eat.*

2) *-s* form of the verb (*eats*) is used for the third person singular present tense:

He/She/It eats everyday.

3) The past form (*ate*) is used to express a past action:

He ate three times yesterday.

4) The present participle (or the *-ing* form) (*eating*) is used for:

a) the progressive aspect (*be + V-ing*):

He's eating now.

b) in *-ing* participle clauses:

Eating early, he could be at the office on time.

5) The past participle (or *-ed* participle) is used for:

a) the perfect aspect (*have + V-ed2*):

He has eaten all the food.

b) the passive voice (*be + V-ed2*): *All the food was eaten.*

c) the *-ed* participle clauses:

Eaten by the dog, the food was no more available.

Lexical verbs are of two kinds, regular (*end*) and irregular (*eat*). In all of them the *-s* form and *-ing* participle are predictable from the base form. With the irregular verbs you cannot predict the second and the third forms.

☺ Time, aspect, mood and voice

Time is a universal, non-linguistic concept with three divisions: past, present and future. By *tense* we understand the correspondence between the form of the verb and our concept of time. *Aspect* concerns the manner in which the verbal action is experienced or regarded, while *mood* relates the verbal action to such conditions as

certainty (Indicative), obligation (Imperative), necessity (Subjunctive), possibility and probability (Conditional). To a great extent these three categories influence each other: the expression of time present and past cannot be considered separately from aspect, and the expression of the future is closely connected with mood. *Voice* is the relation between the subject of the sentence, the predicate and the direct object. In the *Active Voice* the subject is the doer of the action and the direct object the affected (S→P→DO). In the *Reflexive Voice* the subject is also the affected (S↔P). In the *Passive Voice* the subject is the affected of the action done by the by-agent (S←P←byA).

☺ English verb tenses

- Present tense simple is the base form of the verb for all persons except the third in the singular which takes an -s or -es.

*I/You/We/They **swim** in the morning.*

*He/She/It **swims** in the morning.*

Spelling rules.

- Verbs ending in, -s, -ss, -sh, -ch, -x, -o take -es:
I focus - he focuses; I cross - he crosses; I fish - he fishes; I stretch - he stretches; I box - he boxes; I do - he does.
- Verbs ending in a *consonant* + *y*, change the *y* into *i* and add -es.
I cry - she cries; I deny - he denies.
This does not apply for verbs ending in a *vowel* + *y*.
I play - he plays; I prey - he preys.

Questions and negatives.

- We ask questions in the present simple with the help of *do*.
Do I/you/we/they **play** the guitar?
Does he/she/it **play** the guitar?
- We form negative sentences in the present simple with the help of *do*, too.
I/You/We/They **do not (don't)** **play** the guitar.
He/She/It **does not (doesn't)** **play** the guitar.

Uses of the present simple.

- To express permanent states.
*Romania **lies** in the South East of Europe.*
- To express habitual and repeated actions (with frequency adverbs, such as *usually, always, often, sometimes, ever, never, daily, every + time, in the afternoon, at the weekend*, etc.)
*He usually **goes** to the office in his car.*

- To express general truths and laws of nature.
*The sun **rises** in the East.*
- To talk about schedules and timetables.
*The last train to London **leaves** at midnight.*
- In sports commentaries, reviews and narration.
*Hoggs **passes** to Figs and then **collapses** on the pitch.*
*Julia Roberts **plays** the part of the good woman.*
*Then they **take** the key of the secret room and **unlock** it.*
- For instructions and directions.
*You **play** the game with another three people.*
- To express future actions which are part of a calendar, or cannot be changed.
*Tomorrow **is** Tuesday.*
*My aunt **retires** in three weeks.*
 - Present tense continuous (or progressive) is formed with the verb *to be* (*am, is, are*) in the present tense and the present participle of the verb (*V-ing*).
*I **am writing** a letter.*
*You/We/They **are writing** letters.*
*He/She **is writing** a letter.*

Spelling rules.

- Verbs ending in *-e* drop it when *-ing* is added.
Take - taking; save - saving.
- Verbs ending in a stressed syllable, which contains a short vowel, double the final consonant.
Fit - fitting; rob - robbing; forget - forgetting.
- Verbs ending in *-l*, double it when *-ing* is added.
Travel - travelling.
- Verbs ending in *-ie* change them to *-y* and add *-ing*.
Lie - lying; die - dying.

Questions and negatives.

- We ask questions in the present progressive with the help of the verb *to be*.
***Am I looking** for the right address?*
***Are** you/we/they **looking** for the right address?*
***Is** he/she **looking** for the right address?*
- We make negative statements also using the verb *to be* and the negative particle *not*.

*I **am not**⁴ **waiting** in vain.*

*You/We/They **are not (aren't) waiting** in vain.*

*He/She **is not (isn't) waiting** in vain.*

Uses of the present progressive.

- To express actions which are taking place now, at the moment of speaking. It is considered the real present tense.

*I **am reading** a good book (Now, that you've asked.)*

- To express temporary actions, but not happening at the moment of speaking.

*Helen **is taking** driving lessons for two months.*

- To express change and development.

*It **is getting** colder and colder.*

- To express irritation or annoyance, usually with the following adverbs: *always, forever, constantly, and continually.*

*You **are always forgetting** to do your homework.*

- To express a future action that has already been arranged (time and place).

*We **are having** dinner out tonight.*

Time expressions usually used with present progressive are *now, at the moment, at present, nowadays, these days* etc.

!! State verbs take a progressive form when they have a changed meaning.

*I **see** well from that distance. (State meaning – 'perceive, notice')*

*I'**m seeing** all my family at the party tonight. (Dynamic meaning – 'meet')*

*This soup **tastes** so good! (State meaning)*

*You **are always tasting** what's in the pots. (Dynamic meaning)*

EXERCISES

1. Underline the correct tense.

1. The bus (leaves/is leaving) at noon so we'd better hurry up.
2. He (grows/is growing) older and older every day after his son's departure.
3. Have you seen John? I (look/am looking) for him to tell him the news.
4. I and my father (know/are knowing) the answers to all the questions you could ask.
5. First, you (boil/are boiling) six eggs and then you (mix, are mixing) them with half a pound of sugar.
6. Mark had an accident the other day and he (uses/is using) his mother's car these days.
7. It rarely (rains/is raining) in the Sahara Desert.

⁴ There is not a short form for *am not* although in AmE use there is the incorrectly grammatical *ain't*.

8. I (see/am seeing) Michael at the meeting tomorrow night.
9. They (go/are going) to the seaside next month.
10. He always (gets/is getting) into the house with dirty shoes.

2. Put the verb in brackets into the correct present form.

1. Elephants *..have..* (have) a great memory.
2. Are you busy? ~ Yes, I ...(wash) the dirty clothes in the house.
3. More and more children ... (learn) how to work on the computer nowadays.
4. Tom ... (throw) his birthday party tonight. Have you been invited?
5. They ... (play) tennis from 4 p.m. till dusk every afternoon.
6. What I ... (do) next? ~ You ... (add) flour and cream to the mixture and ... (mix) it for ten minutes.
7. Where you ... (come) from? ~ I ... (come) from Japan.
8. Peter ... (play) the piano too loud and I can't hear you.
9. What are your plans for Saturday night? ~ Well, I ... (go) to the theatre with my fiancé.
10. Hi, Jane! ~ Oh, we always ... (meet) each other in this car park.

3. Put the verbs in brackets into the right present tense.

A hunter *..is..* 1. (be) on his way back to the camp when a big lion suddenly ... 2. (appear) not thirty steps away. The hunter ... 3. (wait) until the lion ... 4. (be) ready to jump, ... 5. (fire) and ... 6. (miss). He ... 7. (think) that he ... 8. (be) lost - but then a miracle ... 9. (happen). The lion ... 10. (jump) too far, and ... 11. (land) behind the hunter, who quickly ... 12. (run) into the camp.

The next afternoon the hunter ... 13. (go) into the yard to practise shooting. Suddenly he ... 14. (hear) a strange noise outside the fence. He ... 15. (look) over and ... 16. (see) the lion, who ... 17. (practise) short jumps.

4. Rewrite each sentence, beginning as shown, so that the meaning stays the same.

1. You don't have to worry about the news, just speak to him!
The news *..doesn't matter, just speak to him!..*
2. There are a lot of students who take up courses at two colleges at the same time.
More and more students
3. What is inside the trunk of this car?
What does.....
4. What is the price of this dress?
How much

5. I think these cakes have a strange taste.
These cakes
6. Mary keeps meeting that badly behaved young man.
Mary is
7. Don't mind Edgar's sarcastic jokes. He is not serious.
Edgar is
8. What about going to a picnic on Sunday?
How do
9. What is the sense of his remarks?
What do
10. Sarah gives me a lot of useful advice in my new job.
My new job

• Present perfect simple is formed with the help of the verb *to have* in the present and the past participle of the verb.

*I/You/We/They **have answered** all the questions.*

*He/She **has answered** all the questions.*

Questions and negatives.

- Questions are formed by the inversion of the auxiliary and the subject.

***Have** I/you/we/they **answered** all the questions?*

***Has** he/she **answered** all the questions?*

- Negative sentences are formed by adding not after the auxiliary.

*I/You/We/They **have not (haven't)** **answered** all the questions.*

*He/She **has not (hasn't)** **answered** all the questions.*

Uses of the present perfect simple.

- To express an action which began in the past and still continues up to the present. State verbs such as *be, have, like, know* are usually used together with *since* (showing the beginning of the action) and *for* (showing the duration of the action).

*She **has known** him since January.*

*Tom **has lived** here for the past five years.*

- To express the result of an action that has recently finished.

*I've just **bought** this hat. Do you like it?*

- When there is no time reference and the accent is placed on the action itself.

*The Smiths **have sold** their old house.*

- To express an action done in a period of time that is not over yet.

*I've **written** two letters this morning. (It's only 11 a.m.)*

- To express a completed future action in a time clause.
*You won't get out until you **have finished** your homework.*

Time expressions usually used with the present perfect are *already, always, ever, never, just, so far, never, today, lately, recently, up to now, still, this week/month, since, for* etc.

- Present perfect continuous is formed with the verb *to be* in the present perfect simple (*has/have been*) and the present participle of the verb (*V-ing*).

*I/You/We/They **have been running** for two hours now.*

*He/She **has been running** for two hours now.*

Questions and negatives.

- We ask questions in the present perfect continuous placing *have/has* in front of the subject.

***Have** I/you/we/they **been running** for two hours?*

***Has** he/she **been running** for two hours?*

- Negative sentences are formed adding *not* after *have/has*.

*I/You/We/They **have not (haven't) been running** for two hours.*

*He/She **has not (hasn't) been running** for two hours.*

Uses of the present perfect continuous.

- To express an action that began in the past and is still taking place. Some time expressions that strengthen this continuation are: *for, since, all morning/day* etc.

*Sue **has been studying** all day.*

- To express an action that may have finished but whose results are still visible.

*He's all wet; he's **been running** all morning.*

- To express an irritating or annoying action.

*Somebody **has been using** my computer.*

!! Present perfect simple is used to show the number of the actions or the result while present perfect continuous shows the duration of the action.

*She **has called** you **three times** since you left.*

*She **has been calling** for more than **an hour**.*

EXERCISES

5. Put the verbs in brackets in the **present perfect simple or continuous**.

1. He *..has been trying..* (try) to find a solution to the problem for more than an hour without any success.
2. Mary ...(fail) her exam two times and she's very upset.
3. I ...(ask) him many times about his future career.
4. What's this noise? ~ Our neighbours ...(fight) for hours.
5. Your secretary ...(look for) you all morning. Where ...(be)?
6. Who ...(write) with my pen?
7. John ...(read) Fowles's latest novel and is very impressed.
8. Since you came, all the people ...(quarrel) over your new project.
9. Margaret ...(play) the piano all morning and now she ...(stop).
10. He ...(grow) roses for years but he never ...(have) such wonderful flowers.

6. Fill in *for* or *since*.

1. I have never left this town a) *..since..* I was born; b) *..for..* ten years.
2. It has been getting cold a) *...yesterday*; b) *...more than a week*.
3. They have been playing football a) *...two hours*; b) *...two o'clock*.
4. Our baby has been crying a) *...the last half-hour*; b) *...he woke up*.
5. We haven't seen a good film a) *...last week*; b) *...ages*.
6. They haven't written to their parents a) *...they left for Canada*; b) *...the beginning of the year*.
7. She hasn't spoken to her husband a) *...he came home after midnight*; b) *...a whole week*.
8. This lazy painter has been painting my daughter's portrait a) *...one year*; b) *...I hired him*.
9. She has been seeing Charles a) *...his divorce*; b) *...a long time*.
10. It hasn't been such a famine in the region a) *...ancient times*; b) *...longer than I can remember*.

7. Choose the correct answer.

1. *..B..* a good play lately? ~ Yes, I saw *Macbeth* yesterday.
A. Have you been seeing B. have you seen C. You have seen
2. It was a surprise Angela could speak English so well. ~ Oh, shefor a year now.
A. has been studying B. has studied C. is studying
3. What's your Mum doing? ~ She ...lunch in the kitchen all morning.
A. is cooking B. has cooked C. has been cooking
4. She ...washing up yet. She's still working.
A. doesn't finish B. hasn't been finishing C. hasn't finished
5. They ...never...the Bran Castle before.

- A. visit B. did visit C. have visited
6. Whatall morning?
A. are you looking for B. have you looked for C. have you been looking for
7. He ...only three questions all afternoon.
A. has answered B. has been answering C. is answering
8. ...your travel ticket or are you still queuing?
A. Did you buy B. have you bought C. have you been buying?
9. They ...the house for a week and still haven't finished.
A. are decorating B. have decorated C. have been decorating
10. I ...him for a very long time.
A. know B. have known C. have been knowing

8. Rewrite each sentence, beginning as shown, so that the meaning stays the same.

1. This is his third visit to this museum.
This is the third time *he has visited this museum.*
2. It's over ten years since we met.
We have
3. There is quite a change in your behaviour.
Your
4. The last time they had a long holiday was three years ago.
They haven't
5. Suzy started taking driving lessons a week ago.
Suzy has
6. The landlord last got money from his tenants five months ago.
The tenants haven't
7. I don't know where my glasses are.
I have
8. He bought his TV set ten years ago and he's still using it.
He has
9. After she started jogging, she felt much better.
She has
10. This is the first time I'm eating Thai food.
I have never

- Past tense simple is formed in two ways in English:

1. Regular verbs add *-ed* at the end: play - *played*; mend - *mended*;

They **played** in the garden.

2. Irregular verbs change their base form and have to be learned by heart: *run - ran; do - did; make - made*.

He **ran** to the bus stop.

Spelling rules.

- Verbs that end in -e add only -d: *dance - danced; race - raced*.
- Verbs that end in a consonant + y change the y into i and add -ed: *cry - cried, fry - fried*.
- Verbs that end in a stressed vowel followed by a consonant, double the consonant and add -ed: *plan - planned; drop - dropped*.
- Verbs that end in -l, double it and add -ed: *travel - travelled; quarrel - quarrelled*.⁵

Questions and negatives.

- We ask questions in the past with the help of *did*. The main verb is used in its base form.

Did you **play** in the garden?

- We form the negative of the past tense with *did + not*.

I **did not (didn't)** **play** in the garden.

Uses of the simple past tense.

- To express an action that took place in the past, at a definite time, already known or implied.

They **told** him the news **yesterday morning**.

- To express a sequence of actions that took place one after the other.

He **opened** the door and **welcomed** the guests.

- To express habits or states in the past which are not done in the present. This can also be expressed with *used to* (in contrast with the present) and *would* (a typical action and used **only** with activity verbs).

My grandfather **used to** go to market every Saturday morning (but he doesn't do it now).

He **would** drive his car at a high speed.

Time expressions used with the past tense are *yesterday, then, when, last (night, month, etc.), (a month, a week, a year, etc.) ago, in 2000* etc.

- Past tense continuous is formed with *to be* in the past (*was/were*) and the present participle of the verb.

I **was eating** bread and butter.

⁵ In AmE the -l is not doubled: *travel - traveled; quarrel - quarreled*.

We **were travelling** by car.

Questions and negatives.

- We ask questions in the past tense continuous placing *was/were* before the subject.

Were you **eating** bread and butter?

Was she **cleaning** the house?

- Negative sentences are formed with *was/were* + *not* in front of the verb.

I **was not (wasn't)** **eating** bread and butter.

We **were not (weren't)** **travelling** by car.

Uses of the past tense continuous.

- To express an action that was in progress at a certain time in the past.

He **was writing** his paper at 10 o'clock yesterday morning.

- To express an action that was in progress when another one happened suddenly, expressed by the simple past.

He **was writing** his paper when the telephone **rang**,

- To express more actions in progress at the same time.

Mary **was washing** the clothes while her husband **was looking after** their baby.

- To describe the setting where a story developed.

Tom **was walking** slowly on the forest path. The birds **were singing** in the trees, the sun **was shining** brightly, butterflies **were fluttering** through the branches.

Time expressions used with the past tense continuous are *when, while, as, all morning/day/evening* etc.

- Past perfect simple is formed with *had* and the past participle of the verb.

He **had** already **made** the complaint.

Questions and negatives.

We ask questions in the past perfect simple placing *had* before the subject of the sentence.

Had he **made** the complaint?

Negative sentences are formed with *had not* before the verb.

He **had not (hadn't)** **made** a complaint.

Uses of the past perfect simple.

- To express a past action that took place before another past action or a certain time in the past.

They **invited** us to the theatre but we **had** already **seen** the play.

She **had done** the washing before 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

- To express an action finished in the past and with visible results.

*He **had painted** his wife portrait beautifully.⁶*

Time expressions used with the past perfect are *before, already, after, just, for, since, till/until, by, when, never, by the time* etc.

- Past perfect continuous is formed with *had been* before the present participle of the verb.

*He **had been playing** the piano all afternoon.*

Questions and negatives.

We ask questions in the past perfect continuous placing *had* before the subject.

***Had he been playing** the piano all afternoon?*

We form negative sentences with *had not* before the verb.

*He **had not (hadn't) been playing** the piano all afternoon.*

Uses of the past perfect continuous.

- To emphasise the duration of a past action that took place before another past action.

*She **had been practising** for years before she got the trophy.*

- To express a past action that began before another past action and was still going on at that time or had visible results.

*She **had been reading** for her exam when I arrived there.*

Time expressions used with past perfect continuous are *for, since, before, after, until, how long* etc.

EXERCISES

9. Put the verbs in brackets into *past simple* or *past continuous* form.

1. Jim ..*was talking*.. (talk) to Helen when I(see) them in the crowd.
2. Trees ...(shed) their leaves on the forest paths, birds ...(sing) and the sun ... (spread) its warmth over the young couple who(walk) slowly and ...(talk) about their future.
3. I ...(not remember) where my uncle(live), so I ...(phone) mother to ask for his address.
4. When the job ...(be finished) he ...(sigh) with relief.
5. I ...(telephone) Mary when she ...(ring) the doorbell.
6. The guide ...(tell) the party of visitors the story of the painting when that ...(fall) off the wall.
7. The boys ...(make) such a noise that nobody(hear) the telephone ringing.
8. The ship ...(hit) a rock and ...(sink) in less than an hour.

⁶ When the sequence of events is clearly shown by the context, we can use past tense instead of past perfect, using *after* or *before*: *He **told** me the news after he **heard** it on the radio.*

9. Robert(receive) a letter yesterday that(say) his aunt(come) in two weeks.
10. Father(read) the morning newspaper and mother(take) a shower when our neighbour(rush) in.

10. Put the verbs in brackets in the *past tense* or *past perfect*.

1. By the time they ..*got*.. (get) to the museum the exhibitsalready (be removed).
2. I ...(not watch) the film last night because I ...(see) it at the cinema.
3. He ...(make) the same mistake before anybody ...(can) warn him not to.
4. I ...(not know) Mr. Smith ...(work) for you for such a long time.
5. He(pick up) the newspapers the postman(throw) earlier in the morning.
6. She(know) so many interesting things about work in hospital because she ... (attend) a training course for nurses two years before.
7. She(know) all the people in the room as she(be) there many times before.
8. When Peter(phone) Sue, she(study) for three hours for her next exam.
9. They(not buy) tickets for the show and when they(arrive) at the theatre they (cannot) find any.
10. Tom(hire) a car as his own ...(break down).

11. Put the verbs in brackets into the correct past forms. (Use passive where necessary).

A man who ..*had been*.. (1) (be) a ventriloquist ...(2) (walk) into a town one day with one nickel, the clothes on his back, and a yellow dog. That ...(3) (be) all he(4) (have).

Hungry and tired, he ...(5) (enter) a restaurant. "Give me a full dinner, " he ...(6) (say) to the waiter. Then turning to the dog he ...(7) (say), "What will you have?"

The dog ...(8) (look) up and ...(9) (say), "I'll have a ham sandwich."

The waiter ...(10) (cannot) believe his ears. The owner of the restaurant, who (11) (watch) the dog,(12) (exclaim), "Hey, whatthat dog(13) (say)?" And the dog(14) (repeat): "I'll have a ham sandwich."

"Oh!"(15) (say) the owner. "What kind of a dog is that?"

"That,"(16) (say) the ventriloquist, "is the only talking dog in the world."

While the man and his dog(17) (serve), the owner(18) (say) to himself, "What a wonderful dog! If I(19) (have) that dog, I should be the happiest man in the world."

When the dog(20) (finish), the man said to him, "Have another one?" And the dog(21) (answer), "No, thanks, I've had enough."

"Say, Mister," exclaimed the owner, "I should like to buy that dog! Will you sell him? How much money will you take for the dog?"

"That dog," said the man, "is not for sale; not at any price. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I need some money right now, and if you lend me fifty dollars, I'll leave the dog with you for security."

The owner ...(22) (give) him the money immediately. "Maybe," he said to himself, "the fellow will not come back with the money, and then I shall have the only talking dog in the world!" The owner(23) (not notice) that the man(24) (take) the money and(25) (walk) out without paying for his dinner. But as he(26) (go) to open the door, he(27) (turn) to take a last look at the dog. The animal(28) (look) up and said, "How ungrateful you are! After all I have done for you, you sell me for fifty dollars. I'll show you - I'll never say another word as long as I live!" And he never(29) (do).

12. Put the verbs in brackets in the correct past forms.

The day after they ..*came*..(1) (come) home from the sea-side they(2) (set out) on a tour of inspection to make sure everything(3) (be) as they(4) (leave) it. Soon they(5) (discover) that old Hobden(6) (block) their best hedge-gaps with stakes and thorn-bundles, and ...(7) (trim up) the hedges where the blackberries(8) (set).

'It can't be time for the gypsies to come along,' said Una. 'Why, it ...(9) (be) summer only the other day!'

'There's smoke in Low Shaw!' said Dan, sniffing. 'Let's make sure!'

They(10) (cross) the fields towards the thin line of blue smoke that leaned above the hollow of Low Shaw which lies beside the King's Hill road. It(11) (be) an old quarry till somebody(12) (plant) it, and you can look straight down into it from the edge of Banky Meadow.

(Rudyard Kipling - *A Priest in Spite of Himself*)

- Future tense is expressed in several ways.

❖ With the help of the modals *shall* (for the 1st person singular and plural in British English and *will* for the rest of the persons, and *will* for all persons in American English, a tendency adopted by the British, too, lately).

*I **shall come** as soon as I can.*

*He **will be** your true friend.*

Questions and negatives.

We ask questions in the future placing *shall* or *will* in front of the subject.

Shall we go there together?

We make negative sentences adding *not* after *shall/will*.

Peter **will not (won't) recognise** his fault.

Uses of the future tense simple.

This form of the future is used to express:

- Neutral future of prediction, when the speaker is not implied in any way in the future event: *It **will rain** tomorrow afternoon;*
- When the decision for the future event is taken on the spot, without previous consideration: *OK, I'll **bring** the wine and you the cakes.*
- In the main clause of a conditional sentence: *If they ask me nicely, I **will give** them the money they need.*

❖ Another way of expressing the future is with *be going to*, which usually implies a near future (soon). It is used to show:

- The intention of the speaker: *I'm going to study hard this year to get a scholarship; She's **going to** be a teacher when she grows up;*
- Future results of present conditions: *It's so cloudy and cold; I think it's **going to** rain.*
- A remote future action: *When I have grown up I **am going to** visit the South Pole.*

❖ Future is also expressed with the help of *present simple* when the action is part of a calendar, timetable or cannot be changed:

*Tomorrow **is** Monday.*

*Our train **leaves** at 5.30 from Victoria Station.*

*My uncle **retires** in a month.*

Present simple is used instead of *will* or *shall* in time and conditional clauses:

*I'll give you a ring as soon as I **get** home.*

*I'll go with you if I **have** enough money.*

❖ *Present progressive* is used to express a future action, which will take place as a result of a present plan, programme, or arrangement: *We are spending our holiday in Australia this summer.*

❖ Another way of expressing the future is with the help of the semi-modals *be (about) to*, *be on the point/verge of*, *be bound to*, *be due at/to* etc.

*He **is to** visit Spain with the French delegation.* (*Be to* usually expresses an official arrangement)

*She **is on the point of** crying.* (It usually expresses very near future.)

*Peter **is bound to** be here on time.* (It shows an almost certain future action.)

*The flight **is due at** six o'clock in the morning.* (*Due to/at* is usually used in timetables)

❖ *Future simple progressive* is used to express:

- An action in progress at some time in the future: *Don't go there at five; they **will be having** a meeting;*
- Actions already planned or actions, which will happen anyway: *I'll **be having** a party tonight. You'll **be seeing** Tom at the office; please, tell him the news;*
- A polite invitation or request (to see if our wishes fit in somebody else's plans):
*When **will you be visiting** us again?*
*Secretary to her boss: 'Will you **be answering** the phone, Sir?'*

❖ *Future perfect* expresses a future action that will happen before another future action or future moment. If that previous action is still going on, *future perfect progressive* is used.

*By three o'clock tomorrow I **will have learned** the results of the contest.*

*She **will have been washing** for three hours by the time they get there.*

❖ *Future in the past* is expressed by *would* instead of *will*, and the past tense of the already mentioned semi-modals and *be going to*. This kind of future expresses an action that was supposed to follow a past action, not the present moment. For example, I met Paul last April and he told me about his intention of going to the seaside during the summer (last summer, not next, of this year): *Paul told me he **would go** to the seaside (was to go to the seaside).*

Only *was/were to* and *would* refer to a fulfilled future in the past.

The other constructions do not imply a finished future action: *They **were going to** tell him the truth but he didn't show up.*

EXERCISES

13. Rewrite the sentences, using the present simple tense of the verbs in *italics*. Omit any words that may be unnecessary.

1. The art gallery is due to *open* on Monday next month.
The art gallery opens on Monday next month.
2. Rehearsals for the new play are scheduled to *begin* in a week.
3. I can't talk to you any longer. My bus is due to *leave* in half an hour.
4. It has been suggested that the new timetable should *come* into use from the beginning of May.
5. When is your uncle supposed to *come*?
6. The meeting is settled to *begin* at 5 p.m.
7. They are due to *leave* the flat before noon.
8. When are you to *start* the new course on Japanese?
9. Everything has been arranged for them to *get married* on Saturday morning next week.
10. The new department store is due to *have* a sale at the weekend.

14. Use future simple or progressive in the following sentences.

1. *Will ...you...will be coming* (come) to the skating rink this afternoon? Then we (meet) there.
2. It's no use dropping in on him tomorrow. He (leave) for London and (not have) time to talk to guests.
3. What do you think your son (do) next year today?
4. The teacher tells his pupils what they (learn) the next three weeks.
5. Mary doesn't expect her husband to come early from the office as he (work) there all afternoon.
6. Don't let Helen in on the secret; she (spread) it like lightning.
7. If you have promised to go in for the election, they (be) disappointed if you move back.
8. He loves you so much that I am sure he (wait) for you a hundred years from now.
9. We are not sure of our arrival time as, according to the weather forecast, we (drive) in very bad weather.
10. I'm so excited about Sunday: I (sing) a new piece at the opera house.

15. Supply the correct tense of the verbs in brackets.

1. By next summer he *will have passed* (pass) all his exams.
2. The show (end) before we get there.
3. In 2010 they (marry) for twenty years.
4. Until he (know) all the details he (not start) working on the project.
5. Mother (cook) dinner before everybody gets home.
6. You'd better tell him yourself until he (learn) from the others.
7. You'll be able to speak in English after you (attend) a learning course.
8. If we don't get there in time we (be) frowned upon.
9. The teacher (give) them the results after he (check) all the papers.
10. The film (begin) before we even leave home.

16. Put the verbs in brackets into the correct tense.

1. Your car's quite old and consumes a lot of fuel. ~ I know. I ... *'m going to buy...* (buy) another one as soon as I ...(save) enough money.
2. I've won the lottery! ~ Wow, we(buy) a new house and spend Christmas in Bahamas.
3. I must tell father the good news. ~ Don't do it now. He ...(sleep) and he doesn't like to be awakened.
4. Are you going away next week? ~ Yes. And I hope we... (finish) all our tasks till then.
5. ...you (do) anything tonight? ~ I ...(meet) John at a café and ...(have) dinner.

6. I must talk to Jane. ~ Hurry up. She ...(leave) soon.
7. Are you going to Pat's party on Sunday? ~ I'm afraid I can't. I ...(study) for the Monday's exam.
8. The dog's barking. Who could it be? ~ Oh, that ...(be) Freddie. He phoned me earlier.
9. Why don't you hurry? ~ I don't need to. My train...(leave) at 4.35.
10. Have you finished your dinner yet? ~ No, but I ...(finish) it in five minutes.